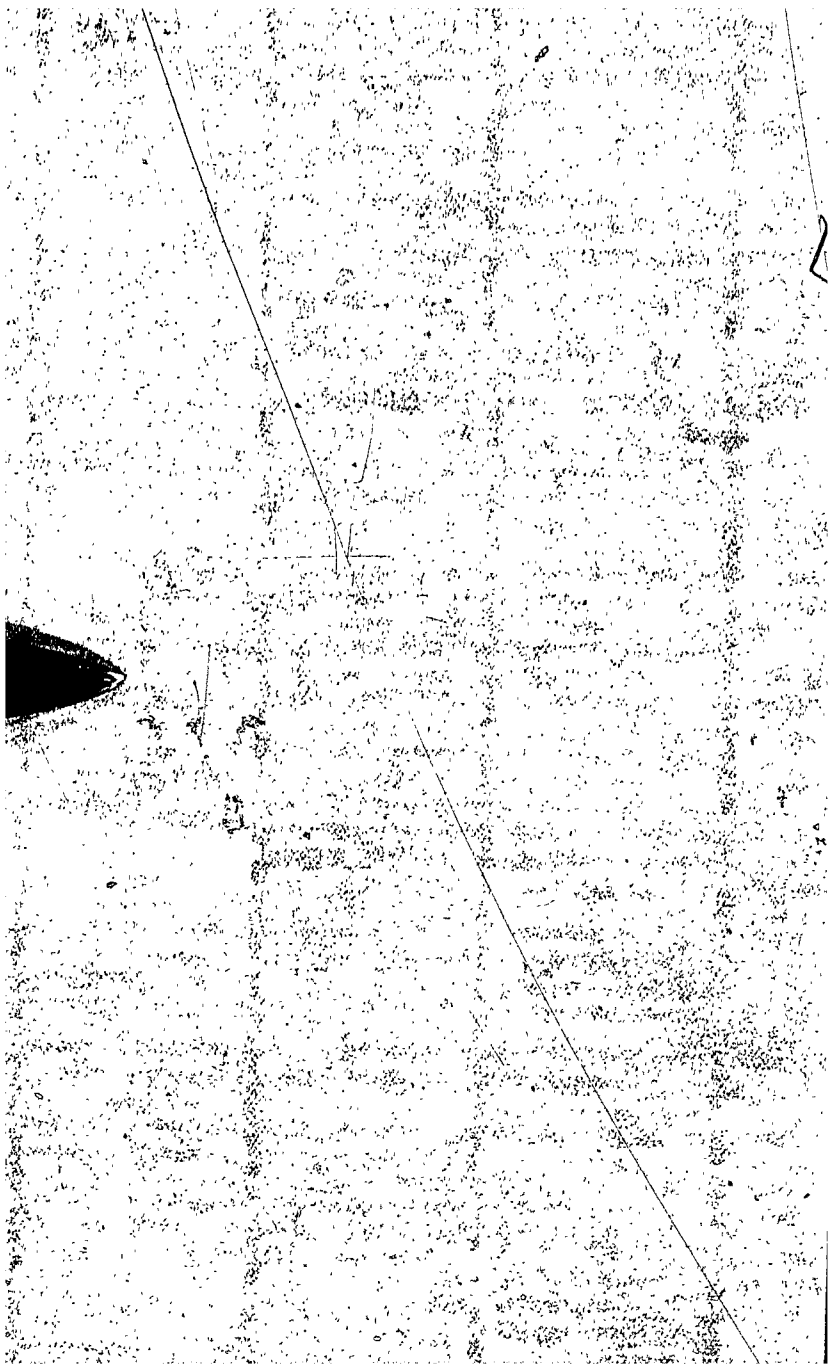


CHURNINGS  
FROM A  
PRAIRIE KITCHEN  
*and*  
DAISY L. SAUNDERS

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CHURNINGS FROM  
A PRAIRIE KITCHEN



*Churnings*  
*from a Prairie Kitchen*

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DAISY L. SAUNDERS



TORONTO  
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CHURNINGS FROM  
A PRAIRIE KITCHEN



# Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen

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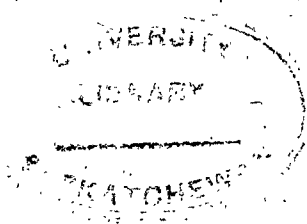
## TO MOTHER

Dear, shall I praise thee for thy waving hair,  
Thy features fine?  
Beauty nor ugliness were, after all,  
No choice of thine.

The sacrifice, the ceaseless watchful care  
Thy children knew,  
God sent them with the tender mother-heart,  
Forever true,

Thy sweet solicitude for childish ills,  
Thy perfect sympathy,  
Were fed and strengthened by the God above,  
Who sent thee me.

Have I no praise to offer, Mother mine,  
For all I owe to thee?  
I give true praise, oh dear one, giving thanks  
God gave me thee.



## A SPRING SONG

The merry old rollicking churn  
Is beating with rythm gay,  
To the laughter sweet and the dancing feet,  
Of the little folks at play.

And clear through the wide open door,  
The bright, happy voices of Spring,  
The cows' soft low and the roosters' crow  
Come gaily echoing.

The brave little willow twigs wave  
Their bright fluffy pennons of gold,  
The crocus shy, in the grasses by  
Her silken buds unfolds.

From Winter's cold prison set free,  
The streamlets rush laughingly by,  
And each pond and slough steals its beauteous hue  
From the fickle April sky.

The song bird's sweet song to his mate,  
Rings gaily from every tree,  
The blossoms dance to the wind's soft-chant  
As it roams o'er the prairie free.

Oh, there's carol in bubbling brook,  
There's music in rustling tree,  
But the heart it must stay neath Love's gently sway  
To catch the melody.

LIFE'S MELODY

I sat one evening 'mid a crowded throng  
Of raptured list'ners to a player fair;  
From whose white fingers as they quickly moved  
Came Orphean notes of music rich and rare.

Then, to my fancy came the sudden thought  
That Life itself is but an instrument,  
And we the players, whose imperfect strains  
Are wafted high to Heaven's Celestial Throne  
To form th' accompaniment of Angel songs.  
And some of us, ignoring fuller tones  
Of sacrifice and pain and suffering,  
Linger on notes of joy alone, and play  
Bright dance and jazz tunes, heedless of the fact  
That our sweet instrument was dearly bought  
With grief and suff'ring by a master-hand.  
And some, irresolute, are half afraid to play  
Our modest solo, lest our trembling touch  
Should waken discord, lose the vibrant charm  
Which beautifies the truest harmony.  
And others, heedless both of time and key  
And every other thought except themselves  
And the impression they themselves create,  
Do loudly bang, regardless that their noise  
Doth kill and deafen other sweeter notes,  
Until some discord, louder than the rest,  
Doth even reach their selfish, deafened ear,  
And they, like workmen grumbling at their tools,  
Do blame and grumble at the instrument.  
And some poor morbid souls do always find

Upon Life's keyboard only mournful sounds,  
And if by chance they strike some cheerful note  
Under their touch it taketh plaintive sound,  
As if ashamed of natural merriment.

But the musician who has learnt his craft  
From the Creator of sounds beautiful  
E'en though he touch the doleful chord of grief,  
There comes no dirge of dreary, dark despair,  
But the rich tones of faith and fortitude  
Which, blending with the happier ones of joy,  
Do form together such a wondrous theme  
Of love, of faith, of hope, of thankfulness  
That Angel choristers do list in silent awe  
To Earth's most perfect harmony.

And lo, the one who plays the sweetest tune,  
It is not he whose slender fingers glide  
With nimble grace o'er polished instrument,  
Which shining surface ne'er has braved the storm,  
Nor felt the scorching of the Summer heat,  
The bitter blighting of the Winter frost.

But rather, he with stooping shoulders bowed  
By others' burdens borne beside his own,  
With eyes bedimmed in tender sympathy  
With others' woes; and fingers old and hard,  
Work-stiffened in the labour fields of Life,  
Who, from his battered case still calleth forth  
The tend'rest sounds of love and sympathy.

The Music ceased, and for a moment's space  
Reigned pregnant silence, then loud-voiced applause,  
And I, like sleeper roused before the dawn  
Arose, reluctant at the music's pause.  
The dream was o'er, and yet the fancy stayed.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Though transient is Earth's song and melody  
That the sweet music of unselfish life  
Shall ring triumphant through Eternity.

## SUN-RISE AND SUN-SET

Just one night of suff'ring, fill'd with vague alarms,  
Just one tiny baby nestling in my arms,  
Mother bends to kiss me, smiling in my eyes,  
"Darling, 'tis sun-rise."

One long beam of silver lights the Eastern sky,  
Bidding night and darkness once again goodbye.  
Joy comes with the morning, Night's dark horror flies,  
Thank God for sun-rise.

Five pink chubby fingers one of Granny's hold,  
One dear head of silver bends o'er one of gold.  
Often thus I've seen them, would that I could yet,  
Sun-rise and 'Sun-set !

In the West the sun's rays linger with regret;  
Whisper "Though we leave you 'tis no time to fret,  
In that distant country where we're shining yet,  
Is Sun-rise not Sun-set."

Long, long days of suffering, hours of patient grief,  
Till her weary spirit found at last relief,  
'Tis although we kiss her with tear-blinded eyes,  
Not Sun-set but Sun-rise !



## THE MINSTREL'S QUEST

Dark, dreary, cold and cheerless was the day  
And longer far than wont its passing hours,  
As if the fog which veiled the saddened world  
Would on their fleeting spirits cast his spell,  
Holding them pris'ner in his damp embrace.  
To the King's Castle, too, the gloom had spread,  
And huntsmen, balked by nature of their chase,  
Were strangely silent, whilst in ladies' bower  
Fingers had weary grown of 'broiderie,  
And jesters' quips seemed meaningless and dead.  
When to the room came swift a little page,  
"Your Majesty, a minstrel waits without,  
Craving the boon of hospitality,  
For he is old and hungry, damp and cold,  
And weary too with constant travelling."  
Quoth then the Queen—"Go, see him warmed and fed,  
And when quite rested bring him here to me  
Perchance his music sweet may bring a charm  
To pass away the time more cheerily."

Into her presence came the aged bard,  
And low before her paid his homage true,  
In hearty thanks to her for favour shown.  
He cried "Oh, Queen, though great my heart's desire  
To pay in some small measure this thy due,  
Yet am I old, and aged hands are stiff,  
And aged lips not ready as in youth  
With quips and fancies for a lady's taste."  
But the Queen answered—"Play us of your best,  
And if you can, then play us something new."

Softly he told of sweet awak'ing Spring  
Of snowdrop pure and golden aconite.  
Fresh-bursting bud and mad-cap daffodil,  
Of daisy-spangled meadows gleaming white,  
All gilded o'er with yellow buttercups;  
Of country lanes where violets are hid,  
Whose fragrant perfume permeates the air—  
Spring's sweetest incense to a loving God.  
He spoke of coppice where the wind-flower grows  
All carpeted with sapphire hyacinth,  
Of mossy banks from which the primrose peeps,  
And the sweet chorus of the mating birds.  
Of these he sang, and then with tender strain  
He told of Summer's lazy, drowsy hours,  
Of fields all yellow with the ripening corn,  
And scarlet poppies nestling 'mong the wheat.  
Of velvet bee and giddy butterfly,  
Whose fairy stolen wings from flower to flower,  
Flutter like petals dancing in the wind.  
Of flowing stream, upon whose placid breast  
The lily grows, and clothed in armour bright  
The dragon-fly darts quickly here and there.  
He told more fully of the valiant fight  
Waged by brave Autumn 'gainst the coming foe  
Of dreaded Winter. How the cruel frost  
Strips off the scarlet warriors from the trees,  
Laying them dead and lifeless on the ground,  
And on the branches sets his glist'ning seal  
Of conquest, white and cold and glittering;  
But o'er the fallen soldiers softly lays  
With tender chivalry for fallen foe  
The show-white pall of innocence and peace.  
He sang of fame which, like a candle flame

Splutters and flickers in the fitful wind  
Or burns soon out in proud complacency,  
He told of Life, an ever-flowing stream  
Coming from heights of purity and love,  
Bubbling at first and laughing on its way,  
Deeper and slower grows with passing time  
Till borne out safely by the flood of death  
Safe to the ocean of eternity.

And then he told of love's immortal charm,  
Of bird for mate, of youth for tender maid,  
Of man for wife, of mother for her child;  
Of love of country for the which mankind  
Will give its life, its health, its liberty.  
And the great love of God controlling all—  
Deeper revealed in the martyred Christ.

He paused at length, and as fond mother-lips  
Linger in parting from the placid brows  
Of little children wrapped in dreamless sleep,  
Tired but reluctantly his fingers strayed  
As if yet loath to leave the silent strings.  
Then bowing low before the list'ning Queen  
He humbly cried "Forgive me ! But I find  
In things quite new no feature beautiful  
Save but the beauty which is found in growth,  
Which seemeth new, but in reality  
Is but the natural outcome of the old,  
E'en as the rose which cometh into bloom,  
Radiant and fragrant 'neath the summer sky,  
Came not to perfect being in a day,  
But lingered long upon the parent tree,  
E'er budding beauty bringeth her to view."

The Queen arose with eyes all shining wet  
Like springtide blossoms, 'ere the fickle wind  
Hath robbed them of the dew's sweet amulet.  
On the bowed head before her—hoary white  
She gently laid her little jewelled hand,  
And soft she murmured "Rise, oh faithful bard,  
For thou art wrong, though beauteous thy lay—  
The precious theme of this thy wondrous song  
Older than time, is newer than the day."

THE RECOMPENSE

Two baby eyes, too young to notice take,  
Gaze at me fondly as I slowly wake,  
One flattened nose, two dainty shell-like ears,  
What have you brought me for my pains and fears?

From those wee lips come neither praise nor blame,  
No sound respondeth as I breathe thy name.  
Yet those dear hands, unmindful of caress  
Pull at my heartstrings by their helplessness.

Unopened blossom, fresh from Love's pure shrine,  
Bearing the imprint of the touch Divine,  
Fair though the bud is yet, it seems to me,  
Fairer the promise that is brought with thee.

Not to the Artist is the canvas bare,  
He, in his fancy, sees his picture there.  
But the white canvas, pure and undefiled,  
Seems to my fancy like a little child.

"Lord, of Thy mercy, take this canvas white,  
Give it the background of Thy presence bright,  
Grant that the colours Life shall soon paint in,  
Be pure and lovely, free from taint of sin."

Soon those dear eyes will brighten into smile,  
That little tongue with prattle sweet beguile,  
Those helpless arms around my neck be thrown,  
Those baby lips be pressed against my own.

Why count the suffering, why count the price?  
Some day, she'll love me for my sacrifice.

## DAY DREAMS

Oh, Day-dreams ! Oft upon the human heart  
You shed your light, e'en in our infant days,  
With dainty visions toning down our woes  
By the sweet varied tints of Hope's glad rays.  
The school-boy doth a gallant knight become,  
With golden spurs and shining armour bright,  
Fighting life's battles nobly unafraid—  
A mighty hero in the cause of Right.  
The maid, in fancy weds some gallant Prince,  
Or charms beholders with her face so fair,  
And many suitors quarrel for her hand,  
Losing their hearts before her beauty rare.  
The childless mother oft in fancy holds  
Her own wee dimpled darling to her breast,  
And doting parents wondrous futures paint  
O'er tiny cradles where their children rest.  
The gallant knight may mount an office stool  
And in some city room his life be spent.  
Though he wield pen in place of lance and sword,  
He may win spurs in Life's grim tournament.  
The handsome prince may be a son of toil,  
With grimy hands, and plain unshaven face,  
Yet be a prince of tend'rer noble thought  
Than many a son of ancient royal race.  
The would-be belle, may have to scrub the floors  
And o'er a washtub lose her youth and grace,  
Yet there's nobility in honest toil,  
And honest work well done brings no disgrace.  
The mother-heart may come to life in vain,  
Nor still e'en once her tender infant's cries.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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The wonder-child may grow to be a dunce,  
Yet still be clever in his Mother's eyes.  
Oh, fickle fantasie forgotten oft,  
Though vain and foolish oft thy mission seems,  
Yet tender hearts will follow tender thoughts,  
Life would be dreary, robbed of happy dreams !

## THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

'Twas Christmas Eve, and to the festive world  
The fluffy snowflakes drifted cheerily,  
Like goodwill messages from angel hands,  
As if that joyful band, who, ever near,  
Seem doubly so at happy Christmas time,  
Were scatt'ring feathers from their downy wings  
To cover up Earth's sordid nakedness.  
From merry lips there came the cheery strain  
Of laughter, messages and greetings kind,  
And loving hearts rejoiced at thoughtful gifts  
From dear ones absent, or did now prepare  
To greet to-morrow's glad reunion.

But from one pair of lips, proud, firm and sensitive  
There came no sound of mirth.  
And two sad eyes denied the gift of tears—  
Nature's panacea for hidden grief—  
'Till suffering was frozen in the breast  
Like ice-bound torrent lacking natural vent  
Ground yet more fiercely on its tortured bed,  
Tearing and bruising like a mill of stone.  
And yet the lonely room in which she sat  
Was warm and richly furnished,  
And beside her stood  
A table laden well with Christmas gifts  
Which had been opened and then pushed away.  
Expensive gifts—if money be expense—  
Whose donors had not spent one tender thought  
On her—recipient of useless gifts.  
Letters, most begging for her charity;



And Christmas cards, not chosen as of yore  
To suit her taste, but lifeless, printed things—  
Saving thereby the trouble of an autograph.  
Weary her limbs, for she, the life-long day  
Had wandered patiently from house to house  
Laden with toys and food and Christmas cheer,  
Mid wretched tenement and dreary poverty.  
Some starving souls her pity keen had stirred,  
With weary tales of woe and suffering.  
Some, too, had eyed her coldly, bitterly,  
With envy fierce, because her wordly lot  
Seemed cast in richer, better circumstance.  
Wee children, wizened, pale and pitiful  
Had snatched the treasures she had brought for them—  
But in their joy forgot their gratitude.

And she, half pitiful to see their sorry plight—  
Half envious of happy homely ties,  
Yearned for the sympathy which none would give—  
Just as those little children craved for bread.  
But as she sat in silent solitude  
Watching the fire whose ruddy, dancing flames  
Seemed to reflect the Season's gaiety,  
Before her half-shut eyes, unfolded wide  
The golden leaves of Christmas memories.  
So strangely sweet the story that was told  
On the first pages of that wondrous book,  
It brought the flush of pleasure to her cheek—  
The happy sparkle to her misty eye.  
Whilst from her heart in deepest gratitude  
There came the cry—"Though happy hours may die,  
Dear friends be parted, loving hearts be broke,  
Eyes be tear-dimmed, and footsteps weary be,

Nothing can rob us of sweet memory."  
She pondered long o'er youth's enchanted hour,  
Which, like a garden gay in Summer time,  
Was full of flowers bright and beautiful.  
But as the garden lost its festive air,  
As one by one the blossoms disappeared,  
Sadder and sadder grew the passing page,  
Until at last, when only one remained,  
She turned away, afraid to even look  
Upon its grey and dreary loneliness.

The weary limbs relaxed, the warm fire glowed,  
The heavy eyelids o'er the aching eyes  
Lowered and closed them to the cheery light,  
Whilst through the room there came a sudden thrill—  
A vibrant hush as of expectancy.  
And from the holly, where from time immemorable  
Good kindly spirits hide in sweet security,  
Came flashing down towards the sleeper's chair,  
A tiny fairy clad in shining white,  
Bedecked with berries red, and mistletoe,  
And hov'ring gently on the weary head,  
She softly whispered to the listening ear—  
"Oh, foolish mortal, thirsting so for joy,  
Yet, when its soft waves lap around thy feet  
Stoopest not down to raise them to thy lips—  
Take now my gift—the choicest one of all—  
The Christmas spirit which doth never seek  
For its own self nor thought nor gratitude,  
But findeth joy in giving others joy,  
Love's sweetest blessings follow in its train."

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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The fairy vanished as the sleeper stirred,  
But a sweet smile still lingered on her lips,  
As bravely now she faced the final page,  
And lo, it was no longer grey and pitiful,  
But radiant with happy, childish smiles !

JEWELS

Groups of roses clust'ring round an old stone pile,  
All agleam with dewdrops, look at me and smile.  
Diamonds may sparkle, but to me they seem  
Cold and dead and lifeless 'gainst the dew-drop's gleam.

Have you watched the rainbow, after Summer rain,  
'Till its transient opal tint's reflected in the grain?  
Sweet indeed the fancy that departed flowers  
Smile again in rainbow train upon this world of ours!

Or, in Winter's season, seen the sunset glow,  
'Till its radiant coral hue illumes the trackless snow?  
Seems somehow that Heaven, having gifts to spare,  
Opens wide her loving hands and sheds them  
[everywhere.

Harebells gaily dancing, dragon-flies agleam,  
Song bird note entrancing as a fairy dream.  
Golden sunflowers nodding seemingly to tease  
Dusky butterflies who dance above them in the breeze,

Sapphire skies above us, Em'rald fields below,  
Ruby berries peeping through the pearly snow,  
Springtide's gay tiara, Amber gems of Fall,  
These indeed are jewels God has sent for all.

As I stroke the ringlets on my baby's head,  
Other gems—though costly—worthless seem and dead.  
As I clasp my sister's loving hand in mine,  
Why should I for riches needlessly repine?

Cameos, though lovely, lack the dainty grace,  
Set in frame of silver of my Mother's face.  
Gold and silver only passing pleasure lend—  
Better far the handclasp of a loyal friend.

Lo, the tender lovelight in my husband's eyes,  
Glistens with the beauty comradeship supplies,  
Why should I unseeing wander far and near,  
Seeking earthly jewels, when I have them here ?

MAGDALEN

She came with suff'ring to the waiting Saviour,  
With humbled mien, and tear-stained, lowered face.  
Whilst scornful lips were parted in derision  
And foolish hearts rejoiced at her disgrace.

She did not think, and thoughtlessly was careless  
Of her good name—the dearest thing of all—  
Whilst cruel tongues were busy with their slander,  
Until, too late—'twas gone beyond recall.

She did not know, and bought too dear her knowledge,  
With broken heart, and weary tear-dimmed eyes,  
Whilst other folks who might indeed have warned her—  
Were ready both to blame her and despise.

She loved too well, and loving well she trusted,  
'Till crafty soul, stained innocence with shame,  
Casting to swine the pearl of spotless girlhood,  
She loved too well—but was she all to blame?

But God knew, and understanding loved her,  
Hating the sin which did His work defile,  
Looked on the sinner great with tender sweet compassion  
And on her judges turned with scornful smile.

"You did not think, yet you presumed to stand in judgment;  
You did not know, but you condemned her yet.  
You loved yourselves too well to succour weakness,  
And help her both to conquer and forget.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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One word from you, perchance, had stayed that slipping  
footstep,

One kindly deed, to safer paths beguile.

Was that dear soul for whom I suffer death and passion!

Not worth from you one tender, loving smile?

## A PROMISE OF SPRING

I woke one morn and the sunshine  
Seemed reigning over all,  
So I hasted me through with my duties  
To answer its cheery call.  
Straight from my prairie-house kitchen  
Into the farmyard light,  
Where the cackling hens and the roosters bold  
United in chorus bright.  
Then a hen with her fluffy new chickens  
Came proudly into view,  
And I smiled at her pride in her offspring—  
I would soon be a Mother too !  
Down to the verdant pasture  
Where late the crocus stays,  
And the little calves safe with their mothers  
Are happily at play;  
Up to the sloping hill top  
Down to the bluff-girt slough  
Where the sunshine's sheen on the waters clean  
The willows glinteth through.  
There 'neath the newly clad poplars,  
'Mid a poor-man's maiden hair,  
Violets blossom in masses,  
And ever here and there  
The strawberry scatters her blossoms  
With golden heart so fair,  
Her runners of crimson outspreading,  
'Mid mosses green entwine.  
And the toadstool bright, like the sunset's light  
Glow warm 'neath the young pea-vine.



Soon will the winter-green open  
Her waxen petals shy,  
And the vetch with her bronze-green leaves and bloom  
Like a creamy butterfly.  
And my heart seemed to join in the anthem  
The feathered songsters sing,  
The at-one-ness of all in Creation—  
The mystic charm of Spring?

Then my thoughts turned to Mothers in Israel,  
To Sarah's incredulous scorn  
To the grief of that poor Jewish woman  
Concealing wee Moses, new-born,  
To Hannah's sad pitiful pleading  
That to her a man-child should be sent,  
How she yielded him up uncomplaining,  
E'er ever his childhood was spent;  
And I entered the spirit of Mary  
And saw for the first time that  
True Motherhood reigneth immortal  
In the words of her "Magnificat."  
The child of such infinite promise  
Came but for a moment to stay;  
Like Hannah I yielded my treasure  
'Ere babyhood faded away.  
I may grieve, but that wonderful morning  
Brought never a vain regret.  
I am old, dear, to-day, and quite childless,  
But in heart I'm a Mother yet.

AN AUTUMN REVERIE

Weary and worn by revelry of Summer  
Like tattered bunting after festal day,  
Brown withered leaves are earthward gently floating,  
Emblems of greatness falling to decay.

Lo ! the wild ducks assembled in their squadrons,  
Now black, now silver in the Autumn light.  
Oh, happy birds to thus escape the Winter,  
Would I could join you in your Southern flight !

Eyes, are you blind ? You cannot see the beauty  
Of those brown tree trunks 'gainst that Western sky,  
Whilst the rich crimson of the naked willows,  
Gleams soft and mellow 'neath the grasses dry.

Cheery indeed its message seems to echo,  
As if in answer to my mournful cry,  
Why pine for beauties past, whilst beauties present  
Ever around thee unregarded lie ?

Oh, craven soul, to fly away from Sorrow,  
Though she o'ertakes you, Joy's still lurking near,  
Smile as you greet her, Earth needs happy faces,  
E'en as the landscape needs the willows' cheer

Sorrow and Joy are ever near together,  
Pleasure, how oft, is dulled by Care's alloy.  
Fear not, poor heart, the present bitter anguish  
May be the birth-pang of to-morrow's joy.

We'd have no Spring if it were always Summer—  
No radiant Fall to charm with colours bright,  
The silver dawn—the miracle of sunset  
Never would greet us but for gloomy night.

Happy reunion follows dreary parting,  
The deepest peace is purchased oft by strife.  
Could we know Hope if Joy were ever with us?  
We must taste Death, to enter perfect Life.

## THE SPINSTER

They called her "Old Maid" and I, as little maid,  
Would often wonder vaguely at the scorn  
Which foolish folks bestowed upon the epithet.  
For she was fragile, gentle, sweet and kind.  
A little woman on whose wavy hair  
Time's hand had left but little touch of white,  
And on whose tender mind had never formed  
The icy coat of bitter selfishness.  
Alone she dwelt with one good-hearted maid,  
Who served as much from love as hope of gain.  
But youthful laughter often filled her house,  
And children's feet went gaily pattering;  
And children's hearts, who know instinctively  
The one who loves them, found her very dear.  
Had Love been false, or silenced in death,  
Or had her ideal love been built so high  
That none to it conformed, and she preferred to stay  
For e'er unwed, to ever seek to change  
Its dreamland beauty for reality?  
I know not, and me thinks within each breast  
There lurks a hidden casket, ever locked  
Save in some instance to a loyal friend,  
Into whose secret chamber none should gaze,  
Nor seek to enter save in confidence.  
Yet was she not alone, for often-time  
As girl, I've wandered quiet by her side  
As she around her garden slowly walked.  
No stretching garden that; one tiny lawn  
Girt round with sturdy, gay perennials,  
Among whose roots no gardener did pry,

Save she herself, or her one servitor.  
And oft she'd pause and look upon some bloom  
And name its giver, silenced now in death,  
And smile again at some sweet memory.  
And since, I've thought, had I to raise to-day  
Some monument to one I dearly loved,  
It would not be of marble like to death,  
Cold, damp and pallid, subject to decay.  
But some bright garden where, from Spring to Fall,  
Sweet blossoms tell of Resurrection Morn,  
And during Winter raise their lacy twigs  
In tender watching ever to the sky,  
Or gleam with berries bright, which seem to me  
Ever to speak of immortality.

Old Maid. Me thinks the name is strangely sweet  
For one who keeps unmarred the maiden heart,  
Through Life's grim conflict to the silent grave.  
Spinster indeed, of such a wondrous life  
That like that web of fairy gossamer  
Woven by insect spinner late in Fall,  
Among whose meshes never struggling foot  
Doth come to mar its tender tracery,  
Which Winter's frosts do only make more beautiful,  
And sunshine turn to threads of living gold.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Dry was the hay in the stable  
On that far-off Christmas morn,  
But it burst into leaflet and blossom  
At the touch of a child new-born;  
Like memories wakened at Yule-tide,  
By the spell of the Christ-Child shed,  
And it formed a soft wonderful pillow  
For the little sleeper's head.

Hushed was the bustle of day-time,  
Silenced both sorrow and mirth,  
When a band of bright radiant angels,  
Came to herald a little Child's birth.  
And still, when in honour of Christmas  
The happy bells merrily ring,  
A thousand hearts join in the chorus  
The joyful angels sing.

Dark was the world, for the sun's light  
Long had been lost in the West,  
When a bright star appeared o'er a Mother  
Hushing her baby to rest.

For the sleeping Child there in the manger  
Mid those fragrant grasses curled,  
Was the Sun which should never know setting—  
The Lantern of all the world.

Quick to that poor lowly stable  
To honour their newly-found King,  
Wise men and ignorant peasants  
Hurried their treasures to bring.

And perchance, as the gaudy gold glittered  
The baby eyes flickered and smiled,  
Or His wee fingers fondled the Christmas rose  
Which was brought by the sorrowing Child.

'Twas the thought, not the gift that He cherished,  
The love by those simple folks shown,  
As they knelt there in lowly devotion  
At their Savior's manger throne.  
For love is the spirit of Christmas,  
And the love which was born that day,  
Shall live though both Heaven and Earth be dead,  
And ages pass away.

## MOTHERHOOD

Only a song-bird on yonder green tree,  
Listening charmed to her mate's melody,  
Whilst around Nature is happy and free,  
She gives her freedom for babies to be—  
A Mother.

A brood of wild ducks in the prairie grass dry,  
Silent and motionless as we draw nigh,  
Right in our pathway their Mother doth fly,  
Risking her life lest her little ones die—  
A Mother.

Only a girl, scarce to womanhood grown,  
Blossom of maidenhood barely full-blown,  
Ent'ring Death's valley afraid and alone,  
Brave in the thought of a babe of her own—  
A Mother.

Only a virgin with tender heart torn,  
Bore uncomplaining those glances of scorn,  
Proud that Messiah of her should be born,  
Gave to Creation its first Christmas morn—  
Christ's Mother.

Sunshine and happiness often will pale,  
Lovers be faithless and friendship be frail,  
Disgrace and suffering lie in our trail,  
But there is one friend who never will fail—  
'Tis Mother.



*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Motherhood's sanctified, Jesus most blessed,  
Forsaken, crucified, beaten, oppressed,  
Yet 'ere Death's messenger granted Him rest,  
Thought of that suffering woman distressed—  
His Mother.

MUSING

By a Gopher Poisoner

Summer and Springtide merging into one,  
Like girlish beauties gaining women's charm,  
Retaining yet their childish dainty grace.  
Blue skies oft flecked with fleecy moving clouds.  
Warm air suffused with freshness and perfume.  
Green earth bud-spangled and grim Winter's dirge  
Drowned and forgotten in rhapsodies of June.

Loud, ardent love songs now have given place  
To happy chirps as, ever on the wing  
Hither and thither busy parents fly,  
Bright cheerful slaves to tiny new-born things.  
Like vagrant petals fluttering in the breeze,  
Gay butterflies play idly through the hours;  
Whilst busy bees for ever interchange  
Love's golden token 'twixt new-wedded flowers.  
The dragon-fly darts swiftly to and fro  
With jewelled body, wings of dainty mist.  
The dew-drenched earth lifts up her shining eyes  
Like happy infant waiting to be kissed.  
Life roams triumphant o'er the Summer world,  
Speaks in the motion of the soft winds' breath,  
Life and New Life, Oh, cruel fate that I  
Walk forth alone with instrument of death.

Oh, Ploughman Poet, now I know the grief  
That vexed thy spirit, as the frightened mouse  
Ran trembling, homeless from thy cruel share !  
Not man alone, methinks, has learned to kill,

To maim, to torture, plunder and despoil,  
Hid by those green leaves, waiting for her prey  
The crafty spider spins her silken toils  
For demoiselles with happy gauzy wings;  
Who, in their turn, their hunger to appease  
With greedy haste kill countless weaker things.  
The bird brings death unto the hapless worm,  
She tears asunder little ones to feed.  
The hawk swift swoops upon his helpless prey,  
The hare sinks murdered by the weasel's greed,  
Man upon man, creature on creatures prey.  
Plants kill and smother others every day.  
Loud strident tones drive sweetest notes away,  
Oh, peaceful scene, fraught yet with ceaseless strife,  
Many can kill, but only one give life.

Wide stretch the fields, one waving mass of green,  
Unflecked, unspotted, as a velvet lawn,  
Where saucy daisy never opes her eyes,  
Nor dandelion raise her golden head.  
Yet, I remember when the roses bloom  
And silverberry with its censers bright,  
Spread even here their subtle, sweet perfume.  
Bright tiger lilies cooled their flaming cheeks  
'Mong verdant undergrowth and daisies white.  
Gaillardias like tiny setting suns  
Lit up the landscape with their colours bright.  
At eventide the honeysuckle fair,  
Weary, perchance of bustling, buzzing bee,  
From chalices of amber and of gold  
Brought forth at last her sweetest hidden store  
That silent moths, silver and fluttering,  
Might sip from thence her tend' rest offering.

O'er there at Springtide once a tiny slough  
Bore part of Heaven mirrored on her face  
Like fairy sapphire poised on wands of green,  
The blue-eyed grasses swayed with supple grace,  
Poor martyred beauties ! Well, indeed your sprites  
May haunt your birth-place in the rainbow's light.

Oh, were this world so vast and yet so small  
That half its creatures struggle for mere space,  
Like to the sky where countless planets move,  
Nor pushed, nor pushing in their 'portioned place !  
I must not tarry, yonder field of wheat  
Must be preserved that mankind may be fed,  
For 'tis not meet that human beings starve  
Whilst hungry rodents steal away their bread.  
And 'tis impossible with my short-sighted eyes  
And narrow mind, to even hope to see  
The wondrous purpose, hidden, though defined  
In the wise working of Infinity.

AFTERMATH

A rosebud oped at my feet, blushing and gay,  
Scattered her perfume sweet, then passed away.  
I gathered her petals light, 'ere all had fled  
And her subtle fragrance lives tonight in leaves crushed  
[brown and dead.

A song-bird sang in my ear his matin song,  
And my sad heart thrilled with his cheer, as I passed along.  
For the cares of the present hour soon pass away  
But the joy of the happy Springtide note liveth for aye.

A berry lingered alone on a leafless tree,  
But one morning she too had gone where none could see;  
She was trampled and bruised and torn by careless feet—  
She liveth to-day a beauteous tree with blossoms sweet.

A kind word in desolate ear, a loving deed,  
A tender thought deep and sincere, when we had need,  
These may pass in a moment's space, but without end  
Is the sympathy thus inspired by a loving friend.

The glamour of new-born love, its message true,  
Oft in the common-place of life 'most lost to view,  
Liveth and reigneth yet in wedded hearts,  
Breathes in the spirit of comradeship that time imparts.

A soldier lad, loyal and true, on the Fields of France  
Risking his all at his duty's call in War's grim chance,  
E'en though he came not back again from scene of strife,  
Is at peace, and his work and mem'ry both have endless life.

## THE HOUSE PLANT

She had come from the land of bud and bloom  
To be a farmer's bride,  
But her young heart sank as her home-sick eyes  
Scanned the rolling prairie wide.  
And the quaint little shack of logs for which  
Her lover had worked and planned.  
But she checrily smiled, lest his watchful eye  
Should see and understand,  
That the bare little house he had built with such pride  
And longed for her to share,  
Seemed most dreadfully small and cramped inside  
And ugly and dark and bare.

But the happy Spring came, and on prairie brown  
Bright blossoms began to come,  
And the poor little shack seemed its pleasures to share  
For love's sunshine had changed it to home.  
And the blithe little housewife who sang at her work  
Oft smiled as she thought of the day  
When her heart had felt lonely, her wee home so bare  
And the landscape so dreary and grey.

And once, whilst a driving through newly-clad world  
With her husband, the happy birds sung,  
And the trees were green misty with bud-burst of Spring,  
And the glad pussy-willows soft hung.  
Then they called on a friend on a neighbouring farm,  
And there in the tiny front room  
The windows were crowded with cheery house plants  
Gaily covered with bright coloured bloom.

But their beauty was lost to the new-comer's eyes—  
Though her husband to praise them began—  
For each beautiful plant had its sturdy brown roots  
In a discarded vegetable can.

And she said as they both journeyed homeward that day  
"It does seem so foolish to me  
To shut out the beautiful world that's outside  
The colour of sky and of tree.  
I'd sooner my windows were empty of plants  
And looked, perchance, dreary and bare  
Than have an unsightly array of old tins  
For ever assembling there."

But the Summer came on and one hot sultry day  
She felt really too weary to rise,  
Her head it was aching, her limbs they seemed numb,  
She'd a dull, grinding pain in her eyes;  
Though her husband was thoughtful, his work he must do  
And 'twas lonely when he was away  
And she longed so for someone in whom to confide,  
For the time on her heavily lay.  
When a rattling old buggy came up to the door  
And a voice cried "Dear, may I come in?"  
And her neighbour appeared, and she bore in her hand  
A sturdy young plant in a tin.  
And she said "Dear, I'm sorry to know you are ill,  
And I thought perhaps lonely you'd be,  
So I brought you this cutting to gladden your eyes,  
Plants are always such pleasure to me!"

Then the hardened old hands bathed the suffering head  
And freshened the stuffy sick room.

And the cheery old face such sweet sympathy shed  
    She seemed quickly to lighten its gloom,  
As the sick woman watched the plain homely old form  
    Through her mind quick the fancy crept in  
That the kindly old heart was like one of her plants—  
    Passing fair in its battered old tin  
And as it was some time before she arose,  
    She'd often the tiny plant scan,  
And she grew so to love its fresh, tender young shoots  
    She forgot that it grew in a can.

Then the Fall work began, and she had'nt the time  
    With the harvesters' meals to prepare,  
To wander outside in the ripening fields  
    And joy in the beauty out there,  
And her head often ached as she bustled away,  
    And she often felt weary and ill,  
But she'd always the time for a short loving glance  
    At the plant on the low window sill.

Then the Winter time came, and the flowers outside  
    'Neath the snow's cosy mantle safe lay.  
But the cheery young house plant grew happily on,  
    And lo ! upon glad Christmas day  
Its first velvet blossom of bright scarlet hue,  
    From the green bud opened wide,  
As if she too, had a message true  
    To deliver at Christmastide.

And warm round the stove there that happy young pair  
    Were reading their letters from home,  
Of the pleasures and joys of the lives they had left,  
    And he thought of the struggle to come,



And his eyes caught the work-roughened hands of his bride,  
Then roamed round the little room bare,  
And he said "Dear, I sometimes feel selfish and mean  
In asking you hardship to share.

It's almost like taking some lovely young plant  
From some beautiful place it grows in,  
And placing it there on that hard window sill  
All alone in a mean little tin." [blooms,  
But she smiled; "There's much prodigal waste of good  
In those carpet-beds out in the sun,  
Though their colours may charm, yet a lover of flowers  
Will obtain much more pleasure from one.

For their beauty of form and of scent are both lost—  
They are crowded, and even the best

The blossom of love part of colour scheme is,  
And is pushed on one side by the rest.

But the happy young plant by itself in the tin  
Has plenty of soil for its need,

It has a joy of its own, its own corner to fill,  
Disturbed neither by tempest nor weed.

But the kindly old neighbour, who'd entered unseen  
Softly smiled as she quickly replied—

"It's not the container that matters so much  
Its the plant that you're putting inside.

For some are so drawn up by pleasure it seems  
They've no roots their own pleasures to find,  
And they're always a' pining for things they've not got  
And the joys they are leaving behind."

"But some set their sturdy young roots in the soil  
And find all the joy that is there.

And they're blooming and bright when the others are dead  
And brighten up life everywhere.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Oh, they're bright and unselfish these houseplants of ours,  
Oft, neglected, they seldom complain.  
Though their leaves may be dusty, their tender roots parched,  
Whilst their sister plants joy in the rain.  
But they do like a sprinkle of praise now and then,  
A tender thought loving and true,  
And a soft helpful touch in the sod round their roots  
Will oft cause them to shoot out anew.  
Then when Winter time comes—well, the blossom of love  
Will be opening ever for you."

GRANNIE

Dear Grannie sat beside the stove  
There in her old armchair,  
'Twas hard for her to walk about  
And so she lingered there.

Dear Grannie had such lovely hair,  
As soft and white as snow,  
It shone and sparkled like the frost  
Beneath the sunlight's glow.

And Grannie's eyes, forever kind,  
Seemed sparkling with fun.  
E'en when she wished them to be stern  
At mischief we had done.

Our Grannie told such lovely tales  
Of Fairy Queens and Elves,  
Of long ago when Dad and Mum  
Were little like ourselves.

Of Riding Hood and Golden Locks,  
Of Cinder Maid forlorn,  
And Baby Christ who came to earth  
One chilly Christmas morn.

Our Grannie, ever happy, yet  
Still happier seemed to be,  
When she'd the smallest baby boy  
Held safely on her knee.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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She'd talk to him and fondle him,  
And take his little hand,  
And, though he couldn't speak a word,  
He seemed to understand

Perhaps 'twas because he hadn't been  
Away from Heaven long,  
He told her of the lovely place  
Where Daddy says she's gone.

We cannot see our Grannie now,  
For she has gone away,  
Since Mother found her fast asleep  
In her armchair one day.

And oh, its lonesome now she's gone !  
For Mother sometimes cries,  
And Daddy looks towards her chair  
Then turns away and sighs.

And Mum at night-time, darning socks,  
And busy all the day,  
Just has'nt time to tell us tales  
Or talk about our play.

But oft she says, when we're grown up  
With children of our own,  
She hopes their Gran will be as sweet  
As the Grannie we have known.

## THE MYSTIC GIFT

Bravely the gay flags waved, the joy bells rang,  
The country wide seemed full of heart-felt merriment.  
From cottage small the blithesome song was heard,  
And in the palace grand, where dwelt the King,  
From happy Queen to lowly servant maid,  
All joined in one great song of thankfulness.  
For to the Royal pair, but two weeks since,  
The Angel-sweet of Life, who ever bears  
Bright human blossoms as a little child  
Claspeth Spring flowers to her loving breast,  
Had safely come, and going left behind  
Just a wee babe, but heir unto a King.  
Was ever such a wondrous baby known !  
Such dimpled hands, such golden downy head,  
Such chubby limbs, such crumpled rose-leaf cheeks.  
So truly sweet his tender infant charms  
The King stood raptured by his tiny son,  
And men paid homage—though each parent there  
Was in his heart quite sure that—safe at home,  
Cradled perchance in luxury's soft arms,  
Or crawling barefoot over humble floor  
Was one more wonderful than e'en the Prince.  
For the great God above, in whose immortal eyes  
Princes and peers and humblest cottagers  
Are moulded ever in the self-same mould,  
Sheds the best things of life on all impartially,  
Hath willed it ever that the sun's bright light,  
The wealth of love, fair beauty's subtle charm,  
The miracle of birth and parenthood  
Are felt by all, and ev'ry Mother holds

In loving arms the sweetest child e'er known,  
And every Father worships at the shrine  
Of the most perfect gem of babyhood.  
Both far and near the edict had gone forth,  
That day should be a public holiday,  
And loyal subjects, bringing loving gifts,  
Were passing ever to the Palace gates,  
Whilst the wee scion of the Royal house,  
With rosy thumb held fast in princely mouth,  
Slept soundly on, regardless of the Fate  
Which shed o'er him the glamour of a throne.  
Stifling the house, with subtle sweet perfume  
Of hot-house blossoms, and the Mother-Queen  
Sighing in bending o'er the helpless child  
Born to a kingship, even now a slave  
To the exotic rites of royalty,  
Yearned sore to pick the little fellow up,  
And bear him safe to some secluded spot,  
Where he might breathe unmarred the breath of Heaven,  
His hungry soul draw for itself from life  
The latent goodness as a woodland plant  
Spreading her rootlets in the virgin soil,  
Draws forth the nurture which will make her beautiful.  
But night drew near, and as the shadows fell,  
Scarce had the porter at the Palace Gate  
Shut fast its bars when sadly from without  
The bitter sobbing of a little child  
Floated up sadly to the Royal ears,  
And the great monarch, tender in his joy  
Went out to see the cause of this distress.  
'Twas but a peasant maiden that he found,  
Clasping a bunch of fragrant country blooms  
In two brown hands, but soft to her he said

"Poor child, 'twere sad on this, the festal day  
Of our dear child, one childish heart be sad,  
Or bowed with sorrow, in my kingdom free,  
Pray tell to me the reason of thy grief."  
And tearfully the little maid replied—  
"I could not get away before till now  
To bring my present, and the gate is shut  
And oh, I did so want to see the Prince."  
Smiled bright the King, "Then shalt thou have thy wish  
And lay thy flowers at his little feet.  
With thine own hands. Come quickly; follow me."  
Lightly they stepped into the snow-white room  
Where the young Queen kept vigil o'er the babe.  
She brightly smiled to see the little girl  
And led her gently to the cradle fair,  
Thither to lay her tender offering.  
And lo, as she released it from her hold  
A rosebud opened, and from out its leaves  
A tiny fairy, bearing in her hand  
A wand, dew-tipped, stepped lightly into view,  
And softly murmured, "Gentle King and Queen,  
Behold a fitting escort for your son."  
Then from the blossoms sweet came fluttering  
Like tiny moths, disturbed by careless feet,  
'Mid clover buds in happy Summer-time—  
A company of little fairy sprites,  
Flying above the little sleeper's head,  
And Love was there, like lily bud arrayed  
As first she opens, neath the morning sky.  
Sweet Joy, rose-clad and sunny; golden Hope  
Stern Justice, too, in robes of purple dressed,  
And Truth, bright azure as the Summer sky.  
Valor in scarlet ever dazzling bright,

### *Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Beauty like rainbow, clad in many hues.  
And ever intermingling with the rest,  
Imagination, whose bright-silver-wings  
Like tiny mirrors glinting in the sun  
Did thus enhance the beauty of the rest,  
And glean from all her own most wondrous grace.  
The maid had vanished and throughout the room  
Reigned hush so deep the waiting King and Queen  
Seemed 'most to hear the breathing of their child.  
And when at last the King emboldened spoke  
He humbly cried "Forgive, oh gentle Fay,  
That I mere mortal dare to criticise  
A Fairy offering to my infant son,  
But the great realm' o'er which he'll reign some day  
Needeth not dreamers at its helm of state,  
But men of action purposeful and true,  
Quick to pass judgment, slow to give offence,  
Speedy in hearing, tardy e'er in speech.  
Not like a craven fearing fancied ills  
And sadly meeting trouble on his way.  
Take now vain Fancy from this noble group  
Then were it perfect as a Summer day."  
Then Love was sad and drooped her snowy wings  
And softly cried "However shall I live,  
Robbed of the presence sweet which seems to find  
The dainty charm oft hid from other eyes.  
The tender thought which prompts some simple deed,  
The way to soothe the heart of those I love."  
Then Joy replied, "Methinks, I, too, were dead,  
Or living, but a shadow of myself,  
Robbed of the soul which thrills my happy heart  
With ecstasy of living, day-dream's tender charm—  
The lulling message gentle music brings,



The language sweet of freshly opened flowers.  
Sweet Hope's glad eyes and Faith's immortal hours  
Are surely lost, and thus do I become  
Reduced thereby to level of a beast—  
A creature but of animal desires."  
The King then turned to Valor "Surely, you  
Find foolish Fancy but a bitter foe,  
Weak'ning your heart before the battle comes,  
Dulling the blade which in the scabbard lies,  
With dumb foreboding of the ills to come."  
"My Lord," quoth Valor, "made you e'er a Knight  
Till he in truth proved worthy of his spurs?  
He is not bravest never knowing fear,  
Who stumbles on some danger by mischance,  
For Fear, like furnace, hardens truest steel,  
Making it fitter for the coming fray.  
But rather he who, knowing well the cost,  
Doth pay it bravely e'en though fearfully.  
Even the gain of Calvary were lost  
But for the anguish of Gethsemane."  
Then Justice cried, "I should be doubly blind  
Were I deprived of this, my inner sight,  
And pass my judgment but upon the act,  
Nor heed temptation, cause or circumstance.  
I should be false unto my honest name—  
A foolish traitor to a noble cause.  
And Thought's, dear presence, oft prevents a crime  
By showing up the nature of the deed,  
Or punisheth its doing with remorse."  
Then dainty Beauty, lifting up her eyes  
Moistened with sorrow, pleading, murmured low—  
"God in His mercy, scatt'ring me abroad  
Hath used my presence ever to convey

A hidden meaning to the seeking soul.  
The greatest Artist surely is not he  
Who draws e'en perfectly some wondrous shape,  
But he who paints some common scene of life  
So that beholders see and understand  
The secret beauty God has planted there."  
Then Truth responded, "Listen, foolish King,  
There is no thing of goodness in this world  
But by misuse may turn itself to ill.  
Satan methinks doth lack creative power  
And steals the choicest instrument of God  
To carry out his sinister design,  
And the more finely wrought the instrument he takes  
The more its strength for evil in his hand.  
Bound fast in wedlock, Fancy sweet and Truth  
Bring forth sweet babes of happiness and joy,  
But when divorced by his crafty wiles  
Sweet Fancy, robbed of Truth's restraining wiles  
Like foolish insect flutters round the flame  
Of empty falsehood, idleness and gloom  
'Till singed and blackened, but a corpse remains,  
A thing distorted, lacking raising wings.  
And Truth deprived of the inner grace,  
Fancy alone doth find and understand,  
Standing alone, doth cynical become.  
Or shame her name coquetting with a lie.  
Would you put out yon sleeping infant's eyes,  
Lest they behold some sordid ugly thing—  
Take out his tongue, lest it speak not truth,  
Deafen his ears against profanity?  
Then take not from his mind the seeing eye  
To know when seeing, and to understand."  
Then spake the King, "Oh, little Fairy kind,

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Heed not, I pray, my base ingratitude,  
Give to his parents this most perfect gift of gifts that they  
May know and guide and understand their son."

THE LURE

Oh, there's a lure, there's a lure in the city  
With its merry shining light,  
There's a lure in the work that is ended  
When the Office door closes at night.  
There's a lure in warm comfortable houses  
And gay companions bright.

There's the lure of the oft-told story  
Of the rich men who succeed,  
And Whittingtons search for the gold-paved streets  
In hopefulness but need.  
But unnoticed the poor and the weak go down  
And are trampled by others' greed.

And the country boys flock to the city,  
Like rocks from their moorings pried,  
By the force of some heaving glacier  
From the grand old mountain's side.  
And the farmer mourns as he sees his sons  
Leave home in youth's morning-tide.

And a few remain polished and shining  
In some city monument,  
But many are left on the shingle beach  
Where before their brothers went,  
Worried and worn by the restless tide  
Of the Sea of Discontent.

There's a lure in the heart of the prairie,  
There's a lure in the country's call,

## *Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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There's a lure in the promise of Springtide

There's a lure in the beauty of Fall.

There's a lure in the spirit of freedom

Which reigneth over all.

There's the lure of the bright Summer morning

With sun just come to view,

And the world new-kissed by the soft night mist

Is bathing in silver dew.

And the song-bird's lay to the dawning day

Rings out both clear and true.

There's the lure of just standing a'dreaming

When the busy day has gone,

On some stilly night 'neath the clear star-light

In that silent land alone.

Whilst the lights from some distant hamlet bright

Fade slowly one by one.

There's the lure of the bright sun shining

On a land all dazzling white,

Where the twigs which gleam with the hoar-frost's sheen

Are gleaming with jewels bright.

There's a lure in the glow of the virgin snow

As she blushes at sunset's light.

Let your young children roam o'er the prairie

In Summer and Spring's glad hours.

Let them learn from Dame Nature's own text book

The language of insects and flowers.

And the knowledge which springs from the shy wild thing

Which people this land of ours.

Let her open their eyes to her beauty,  
Let her whisper her songs in their ears,  
Let her quicken their brain with her secrets,  
Let her soften their hearts with her tears,  
And she'll stamp the sweet lure of the prairie  
On their hearts, souls and brains, never fear.

Don't break your lad's spirit with labor,  
Choring from morning 'till night.  
Give him time for both leisure and pleasure  
Help him to use them aright.  
Teach him that working—apart from the gain  
Is the keystone of ev'ry man's might.

It takes patience to make a good farmer,  
And courage and brains and grit,  
The pluck to keep up when he's losing,  
And not to bemoan 'cause he's hit,  
But to set his feet firm on the lowest rung,  
And pull himself up bit by bit.

The patience to wait for the rain-fall  
Without which his crops will all fail.  
The courage to see all his grain fall,  
Quite ruined by half-an-hour's hail.  
To trace in the ears of his standing corn  
The havoc frost leaves in its trail.

But when he's old in his chair by the heater,  
And his past life he'll leisurely scan,  
He has earned, not just got his own living,  
He's been playing the game like a man—  
He's subscribed to the need of a nation  
As only a good farmer can.

## THE QUEST

There was once a king who was brave and true  
And handsome as could be,  
And he ruled his land with a loving hand  
And his people tenderly.  
He had but one fault—he was vain and proud  
Of his personality.

One day he called to his people all  
"Behold, a most beautiful prize  
I will give, to just hear of the loveliest thing  
Which in this fair world lies."  
And he thought of the homage his beauty would gain  
From his subjects' loyal eyes.

And his people all, both small and great,  
Peasant and lord and peer,  
Flocked early and late to the Palace gate  
Before the learned seer.  
The King had appointed to be in place  
Each candidate to hear.

"Oh, the loveliest thing in the world is love"  
Sang a lover fond and true.  
And he sang of a maid with sun-kissed hair  
And eyes of deepest blue,  
Whilst a maiden sang of a gallant youth  
The handsomest she knew.

A musician told of some wondrous song  
Of perfect harmony,

The poet sang of the seasons' grace  
The beauties of bud and tree,  
And the Artist of some great masterpiece  
Of wondrous artistry.

And the architect told of some ancient church  
With towers straight and high,  
With masonry carven and stone clean hewn,  
Standing fair 'neath some foreign sky.  
And a sculptor spoke of a figure of stone  
Which stood in the square close by.

A sailor spoke of the wondrous sea,  
As she hugged the sandy shore,  
Or leaped and lashed like a chained beast,  
Foam-flecked 'mid the tempest's roar,  
Of the countless secrets her waters hold  
Deep down on her weedy floor.

Then a Mother came with her child in her arms,  
She held him up and smiled.  
"The loveliest thing in the world, quoth she  
Is a happy and healthy child,  
With mind untrammelled and fancy free,  
And spirit undefiled."

And a gardener came with a fresh ope'd bud,  
Held tight in his toil-worn hand,  
Which he tenderly laid at the Royal feet  
As he passed the Royal stand.  
But no one e'en mentioned the kingly grace.  
Nor the wealth at his command.



The judges were puzzled and talked all day,  
And on to the morrow-night,  
They tried and tried but none could decide  
Who had earned the King's bounty by right—  
Till an old man rose from the lowest seat  
Where he sat unnoticed quite.

And he murmured in strangely solemn tones,  
Yet full of tenderness;  
"We have heard of such wonderful beauty here  
But surely you'll confess,  
The loveliest thing is the Master-mind  
Which plans all loveliness."

## THE CHRISTMAS WISH

Christmastide happy and cheery,  
Bare world all glittering bright,  
Brave little twigs don their gala dress,  
Brown hills their mantles of white.  
Cloudless sky, blue as forget-me-not,  
Beautiful, glist'ning snow,  
And bright near the drift by the frozen slough  
Is the bluff where the willows grow.

Hark to the jingle of sleigh bells,  
The scrunching of horses' feet,  
The bright happy laughter of boys and girls  
As they flock to the window seat,  
Whilst their bright eyes are fixed on the corner post  
Where, bearing glad Christmas mail,  
Dad's team bravely breaks through the drifted snow  
Which has covered the homeward trail.

Mother, soft sighs as her noisy brood  
Rush clattering off to the door,  
And she looks at the litter of scraps and leaves  
Which cover her kitchen floor,  
But she has'nt the heart to rob her bairns  
Of one bit of their Christmas fun,  
Though her own head may ache at their noisy play  
And she's a heap of work yet to be done.  
And her fancy quick flies to that far-off land  
To the years of long ago,  
To that holly-clad room with its cosy charm  
Where she sat in the firelight's glow,

Whilst her Mother's soft voice told the old, old tale  
Of the Baby Christ-Child's birth,  
And clear on the air came the Angels' song  
Of the Peace He was bringing to earth.  
And she wondered perchance if the subtle charm  
Which of late had crept away  
Was the faint little voice of a tiny Child  
Soft-cradled in fragrant hay.  
Then she smiled as she picked up a paper-rose  
Rude fashioned by childish hands,  
For the Spirit of Christmastide dwelt in its leaves;  
As in garlands of older lands.  
For the Sweet Babe of Bethlehem never will die,  
But ever from year to year,  
His wee arms encircle fresh childish hearts  
And hallow their Christmas cheer.  
He is ever a Child to the childish mind,  
A Youth in His boyhood's years.  
'Tis the weary and sad seek for comfort and rest  
At the feet of the Master of Tears.  
For the childish eye sees but the fairy lights,  
The merriment, laughter and joy.  
'Tis the man looking back sees the bounty of love  
In those Christmas days spent as a boy.

Back to the kitchen her boisterous brood  
Came clamouring all too soon,  
"Daddy must stir up the pudding now,  
Please, Mother, hand him the spoon."  
Their father look down on his pale little wife,  
So sweet in her matronly grace,  
At the brave lips which smiled, though his quick, loving eye  
Caught the traces of tears on her face.

*Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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And he crid "Here's good luck to dear Mother  
And the best that the New Year brings,  
May she share with her dear ones her beautiful gift  
Of making the best of things."

## THE STAR

There dwelt a Princess once within her Father's home,  
Petted and loved and spoiled by everyone.  
No peer too high to bow at her command,  
No gift too rich her fancy might demand.  
One eve from out her palace window she  
Looked forth, and lo, a star of wondrous brilliancy  
Sparkled and glittered 'fore her watchful gaze !  
And she, enraptured by its dazzling rays  
Yearned for the star, and when it was denied  
With petty childishness she stamped and cried.  
All night she fumed and fretted, and by day  
No longer like a happy child she'd play.  
Trampled with carelessness beneath her feet,  
Unnumbered blossoms offered incense sweet  
To their destroyer; for a whole long week  
She sulked and fretted, oft refused to speak.  
One night she dreamed—and lo ! the star came down  
Like a huge gem detached from Heaven's crown.  
Outward she stretched her little hands to stay  
The dazzling planet on its downward way.  
Into a thousand pieces broke the star,  
And lo ! a voice came from the clouds afar,  
"Oh, foolish child who, in thy selfish greed,  
All for thyself ignore all others' need.  
Seek thou the star until you see replaced  
The fallen planet you would have displaced.  
Twas but a dream and yet it seemed so true  
That when she woke and saw the morning dew  
Sparkle and glitter on each bud and leaf  
She scarcely could contain her bitter grief—

It seemed to her like portions of the star.  
And all day long she wandered near and far,  
Seeking the star, but found it not, but found instead  
Each twig and leaf new beauty did reveal.  
Each bud and bloom a tiny star conceal.  
Night came at last, and there with pristine grace  
Bright shone the star in its accustomed place,  
Smiling on little children dressed in white,  
Bidding fond parents once again "good night,"  
Cheering the weary at the close of day,  
Guiding fond lovers on their homeward way.  
To rich, to poor alike, its light was given  
A golden symbol of the love of Heaven.  
Sound slept the Princess, one white dimpled arm  
Cast in abandon o'er her golden head,  
And Angel watchers, hov'ring o'er her bed,  
Looked down and wondered if she understood  
That Life, like meadow studded o'er with flowers  
Is not made perfect by one single bloom.  
Some gift, long sought for, often-times denied  
By the Almighty Father for our good,  
But simple duties plain and uniform  
As blades of grass which ever do combine  
To cast their verdant softness o'er the whole,  
And joys like blossoms, some of gorgeous hue  
Drawing attention by their colours bright—  
Others so timid that their dainty charm  
Is oft o'erlooked, which make their presence felt  
In the sweet fragrance of the Summer air,  
Which wafts their seed to some less favoured field.  
How hapless he, who, but in distant climes  
Sees for himself true happiness and worth.  
He joys more fully in the Heavenly chimes,  
Who hears God's voice in melody of Earth.

## LIFE BEAUTIFUL

Could I but paint the common daily things,  
The hourly beauty ev'ry season brings—  
The dewdrop's glitter on a Summer morn,  
The bright sun setting o'er the fields of corn,  
And countless things oft deemed of little worth,  
Which yet bring beauty to a barren Earth—  
Had I the skill such artistry would ask,  
Yet were my days too short for such a task,  
And the great World were much too small to hold  
Half of its beauties even once re-told.  
Could I but catch in song the liquid note  
Comes ever bubbling from the song-bird's throat;  
The soft wind's, murmur 'mong the rustling wheat,  
The tiny brooklet's singing at my feet,  
The drone of bees, soft sighing of the sea,  
And blend them all in one sweet melody,  
Then were my song the sweetest ever known.  
Yet not one note of it would be my own.  
Man can but imitate, and that in part,  
Mimic Creation and proclaim it Art;  
Yet the Great Master-Artist's kindly eyes  
Look down to watch as ev'ry student tries  
His tool so primitive, of brush, of stone, of sound,  
To catch the beauty freely scattered round.  
The fragrant rose beneath the painter's brush  
Is to the nostrils scentless as a rush.  
The mighty ocean beating on the shore  
Is upon canvas still for evermore.  
'Tis the great golden master-key of thought  
Reveals the beauty which the Artist sought.

How could I sing if I had never known  
The sound of music sweeter than my own !  
Idle my brush, and silent, too, my verse  
But for the marvels of God's universe.  
E'en though sound, scent and colour all unite  
They could not make one simple daisy white,  
Nor cause e'en once her petals to unfold,  
One single morn from off her heart of gold  
Man digs his garden, plants his seedlings there,  
Tends them and waters, watches them with care,  
Prunes useless branches, uproots ev'ry weed,  
Yet cannot make a single little seed.  
He fights with sickness, grapples with disease,  
Probes Nature's secrets, suffering to ease,  
Does wondrous things with medicine and knife,  
Yet cannot give one tiny creature life.  
Patient the Master, ever near to give  
The virile touch which makes the picture live—  
Links his own spirit with the poet's breath,  
Stands by the Doctor in his fight with Death.  
Low bends the workman groping o'er the soil  
Till life God-given beautify his toil.  
E'en as his Master ever stoops and brings  
Unlooked for beauty from plain sordid things.  
Beauty's not Life—nor is Life Beauty yet,  
E'en as the sunbeam on the rivulet,  
Blends with the surface, 'till the waters seem  
Part warm, part cool, part sunshine and part stream,  
Strong as Heaven's glory looks up from the sea,  
Beauty and Life are linked eternally.



THE HOME-MAKER

There is a touch of Autumn in the air,  
A welcome coolness from the burning heat,  
The glaring splendour of a Summer's day.  
In the far West, bright countless colors paint  
An ever-changing background for the sun.  
Who in his sinking, turns again to gaze  
On some well favoured spot until it gleams  
'Gainst the long shadows strangely glorified,  
The while his rays like golden fingers glean  
The residue of brightness from the Earth.  
Like thrifty parent hiding for a while  
From satiated youth some cherished thing,  
The more to joy him on another day:  
From the big fields near by the binders hum  
Still comes incessantly. Here supper waits  
The workmen busy with the fallen sheaves,  
And for a little while I steal away  
From the routine of life, the endless round  
Of household duties, seemingly begun as soon as ended.  
Once again to feel the prairie wind soft fanning on my cheek.  
To fill my nostrils, weary of the scent  
Of over-heated stove and kitchen grease  
With its pure fragrance. Once again to seek  
The soothing grace brain, nerve and body feels  
Which Nature's house-wifery alone reveals.

And, oh ! what feast of beauty she has spread  
Here in the garden. - Heedless of the frost  
Which all too soon will hurry them away  
Are bright-hued poppies, fluttering sweet-peas,

Gay saucy marigolds, whose laughing eyes  
Smile gaily bright beside more sober tints  
Of slender larks spur deep and richly blue.  
Tall stately hollyhocks to whose maternal breasts  
Soft velvet-coated honey seekers cling.  
In fancied safety 'till to-morrow morn.  
And pale nicotiana freshly waked  
From day-time slumber blending her perfume  
With spicy clove and modest mignonette  
Opens wide her blossoms in the waning light  
An earthly constellation gleaming white  
As pictured angel, vigil lone to keep  
O'er timid comrades wrapped in dreamless sleep.  
Dear peaceful Beauty ! Shall the cruel frost  
Enter to-night in to your tranquil halls,  
With vandal fingers snatching at your sweets,  
Leaving your table bare and disarranged ?  
Your wondrous masterpiece most passed away ?  
But yet not lost, for Beauty does not die,  
But lives engraved upon that inner eye  
Of happy thought and tender memory.  
Hidden perchance in safety, not destroyed—  
Nothing was wasted, even once enjoyed.

Greatest of Artists, knowing all too well  
Men's foolish fickleness, who will not deign to see  
But pass unnoticed lovely, homely things,  
Dainty potato blossoms, and the fronds  
Crimson and gold which deck the carrot bed,  
But ever seek for rarer blossoms, scorning when supplied.  
Whose eager eyes smile welcome to the leaves  
As freshly green in Springtime they unfold,  
Then fail to note their presence 'till the Fall

When Autumn's magic changes them to gold,  
Spring comes in triumph, silent goes away,  
Lives out her life, then passes without sigh,  
And few remark her going in the joy  
And welcome presence of a Summer night.  
Is it for this you quickly snatch away  
This wondrous work with colours scarcely dry  
The more to print its beauty on his heart;  
As friends far distant ever try to keep  
One cherished image of their loved ones clear  
As when last seen, so is he ever young,  
Who hears Death's whisper in his childhood's years.  
And they who part in health will never mourn  
The touch of sickness, shadow of decay,  
The lines of sorrow on each other's face.

Soft drowsy bees, I wonder if you, too,  
Dream of a universe completely made  
For your own pleasure, heedless of the fact  
You are but fragment of a mighty whole,  
Serving though served, for ev'ry blossom fair  
You seek to pillage gathers from your store  
Of hoarded treasure her appointed share  
With careful thought for future of her race.  
Thus in the loom of life, no single thread  
Stands out alone, but each and all,  
Some warp, some woof, continually entwine  
To make one fabric. Man is but strand  
Of this same weaving, even though he bear  
The stamp of sovereignty that after all  
Is but of service, for the meanest slave  
Knows but one master, servant he of all  
Who rulest all. Close is he woven ever by the hand

Of the Almighty Weaver that he may  
Leave a work finished, bear a soul away.

The binder stops, a silence, then the sound  
Of jingling harness, whinnying of mares  
Raised loud in answer to their offsprings' cry,  
And men returning. Dreams will not supply  
A workman's need of nourishment, but I  
Turn to my work refreshed, build up the fire,  
Give one last look and touch  
To waiting-table, greet them as they come  
Weary, sweat-soiled, with welcome to a home.

## THE GIFT ABIDING

Once when the gloomy waters covered Earth's oozy slime,  
And the grim darkness reigned o'er the unborn world  
Back in the annals of time,  
Stronger and stronger God's spirit  
Grew 'mid that endless night.  
'Till the golden dawn of the day first-born  
Burst forth in a glory of light.  
Bright gleamed the waves in the sunlight  
And borrowed Heaven's azure hue  
'Till colour and light did their hands unite  
And brought forth a beauty new.  
Whilst the golden sun sank in the crimson West  
And the silver moon reigned in his stead.  
And the star-spangled robe of the silent night  
Gleamed bright from the sky o'erhead.  
Back to their place rolled the waters  
At the touch of a mighty hand,  
And the young plants burst open their tender leaves  
To cover the naked land.  
Colour and light were triumphant,  
Ever 'mid peace or storm,  
And fair Beauty then took her another grace  
The mystical marvel of form.  
Silent the world but for wave-beats  
And the low mournful moan of the breeze,  
'Till the song-birds' lay to the new-born day  
Burst forth from the budding trees,  
And each creature then took him a different note  
And joined in the glad refrain.  
And the mighty hills took up Creation's voice

And echoed it back again.  
Light, color, form, beauty and music  
All of them there to greet  
The precious clay, which so lifeless lay  
And still at the Master's feet,  
And the life of God breathed in its nostrils,  
And opened its blinded eyes  
And man joined in the joy of creation  
With the Lord of Paradise.  
Yet often he'd gaze at the sunset  
Down in the crimson West,  
And longing he watched as the fleecy cloud  
Dipped low o'er the mountain crest,  
And silent he'd list to the birds' sweet song  
And played with God's creatures wild  
Whilst his lonely heart yearned for an answering note  
From his kind, and the voice of a child.  
Wounded God's sensitive spirit  
His presence could not suffice  
But in mercy He added another grace  
To the charm of Paradise.  
And a newer love crept in man's fickle heart  
And tenderly there began  
The comradeship lovely of husband and wife—  
The first earthly-friendship of man.

Man carelessly turned from the way of God  
And followed the pathway of sin,  
And worry and work dogged his weary steps—  
Care hovered his spirit in.  
Yet a glimmer of Paradise stays with him yet  
And lightens his way to the end,  
In the faith of his children, the love of his wife,  
The comradeship true of a friend.

## AFTER THE RAIN

After the rain, the sun, ashamed of hiding,  
Peeps through the clouds upon the freshened earth,  
Kissing the buds whose downcast heads are chiding,  
Turning again their sorrow into mirth.  
Deftly his fingers turn each drop of moisture  
To gleaming gem upon rain sodden leaf,  
Bringing again glad ending to the story,  
Closing with joy an episode of grief.

After the rain, the rainbow in its glory  
Stretches like arch across the stormy sky,  
Telling again the ne'er forgotten story  
Of the great promise of an age gone by.  
Bright 'neath its glow the waving grain is gleaming  
Gaining new splendour from the Heaven's light.  
Earth and sky meet—no space seems intervening  
'Twixt gleaming field and avenue of light.

It is life's passing pleasures that we cherish,  
The cheery fire-weed growing by the way,  
Filling with beauty bare unsightly places  
Passes unnoticed oft 'till close of day,  
When the dear sun bent low in benediction  
Stoops to embrace its shining petals light,  
Crowning a day of honest sweet endeavour  
With the soft halo of his mystic light.

It is some simple word, some fleeting action,  
Some loveliness of sympathy or thought,  
Calls to the best in me to re-awaken  
For the sweet quest of friendship to be sought.

There is a charm of something in his smiling;  
A subtle beauty tongue cannot define,  
Gently my heart to paths of love beguiling,  
Linking his soul in sympathy to mine.

The cheery sun could light no gleaming raindrop,  
Were there no raindrop waiting to be sought.  
The gorgeous rainbow never come to being,  
But for the moisture that the clouds have brought.  
The flaming weed would find no sunset glory  
Had she no beauty in herself to lend.  
All lovely thoughts are born of lovely thinking,  
To every friendship there is first a friend.

May it not be these glimmerings of beauty  
Flashing at moments into dreary lives,  
As in sweet childish fancy, Heaven's highways  
Shine through the curtain of the starry skies,  
Are but the touches of the love eternal,  
Bringing to view man's latent spark divine,  
Crying again "In beauty of my creatures  
Lo, I am with you till the end of time."



A PRAIRIE SONG

Roses, shimmering roses  
Scattering fragrance sweet,  
Gleam from the tangled prairie grass  
Peep from the orderly wheat.  
Gold stars soft cradled in coral cups  
Nearing red, blush or cream.  
Like lovely thoughts scattered in work-a-day world  
For those who will tarry to dream.  
Dragon-flies gossamer jewelled,  
As weaver sun sinking to rest  
Is changing his whimsical glimmering light  
To mantle of gold in the West,  
Cling to the waving stems of grain,  
Gleam in the waning light  
Like fairy steeds tethered at closing of day  
Waiting the passing of night.  
Rolling fields silent as Ocean  
In dear old Fairyland,  
With verdant hills standing like giant waves  
Arrested by magic hand,  
'Till in fancy we see them crash and break  
In foam at our waiting feet.  
As from silver tongued harebells come wedding chimes  
For waking princess sweet.  
Country of vastness and color  
Rolling land, limitless sky  
Here is no noble ancient spire  
Witness of ages gone by.  
Here is no mossy ruin old  
Furrowed by vanished feet.

Yet stories of fortitude, courage, and love  
Speak from those acres of wheat.  
There is a special beauty  
Granted to ev'ry age.  
Beauty of helpless innocence,  
Beauty of hoar-headed sage.  
Beauty of mountain, lake and hill  
River and pond and sea.  
Beauty in beauty that's vanished, and gone  
Beauty in beauty to be.  
Children of youthful nation  
Garnered from ev'ry shore.  
Fathered by ev'ry race and creed  
Scattered the wide world o'er.  
Bring of your best in health and strength  
Body and thought and brain,  
Beauty your forefathers cherished and sought  
Bring that your children may gain.

## TO A HYACINTH

Here in my window, heedless of the season,  
Sturdy green shoots press upward to the light,  
Proud to awaken, tender buds unfolding,  
Scorning to sleep 'neath coverlet of white.

Dainty as sunbeam 'prisoned in the rainbow,  
Fragile as porcelain, as thy scented breath  
Reaches my nostrils Winter time seems waning,  
Light and life joy o'er gloominess and death.

Ordered thy days, no frost to check thy growing,  
Transport of grief nor sorrow come thy way.  
Happy content in fitful Winter sunshine  
Captive though free thy beauty to display.

Never thy leaves shall frolic with the breezes,  
Happy bird songsters o'er thee gaily sing,  
No insect callers stay to sip thy sweetness,  
Bearing love's philtre on their parting wing.

No ardent sun shall sear thee with his passion,  
Roaring loud wind proclaim thee as his own.  
Dewdrop be-gem thee pioneer of beauty,  
Cloistered like nun, safe, sanctified, alone.

Only to ears deaf, heedless to their pleading,  
Mutely thy bells in sweet profusion cling,  
Tune in on fancy they will peal with music  
Vibrant with hope and ecstasy of Spring.

Gleaning from Life its choicest, freely giving  
Best of thyself in beauty back again.  
Victors of peace may know no crowning laurel.  
Yet is their triumph destined to remain.

Happy brave youth, though life blood slowly flowing,  
Falling to ground first summoned thee to birth,  
No man in passing ever left behind him  
Treasure more lovely to the sons of earth.

## THE PIONEERS

### To the Barr Colonists

Fresh from the Motherland's meadows and streets,  
Shop, office, factory, plough.  
With the salt tear of parting scarce dry on their cheeks  
With the kiss of farewell on their brow.  
Like brave youth 'coming man, they turned bravely away  
From the sweet ties of friendship and home.  
As the love of the past soft entreated them "Stay,"  
The hope of the future cried "Come."

Brave fortunes were planned in those pioneer days  
As they journeyed with jesting and smile.  
And the pains of the present were banished away  
By the thought "This is but for a while."  
And hardship and comradeship linking their hands,  
As ever they're won't to do,  
Sweet friendship thought sleeping in dear Old Land,  
Woke cheery and strong in the New.

Yet those island-born hearts must have throbbed and ached  
At times, when the trackless snow  
Stretched in miles of white 'neath their weary sight  
From dawn until sunset glow.  
When the thirsty grain drooped 'neath the cloudless sky  
Or flattened 'neath battering hail,  
When the hopes of a year stood bleached and sere  
In the wake of the grim frost's trail.

When their weary limbs ached with their strange new toil,  
And the prairie breeze pitiless blew

## *Churnings from a Prairie Kitchen*

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Round those flimsy shacks where through roof and crack  
The wind and the rain came through.  
As unaided they passed through the dreary days  
When sorrow and pain were rife,  
And with God alone faced the great unknown  
In the fight for a cherished life.

Is there wonder some faces grew furrowed and worn  
Like the fields they so often trod?  
With both pleasures and ease like the prairie flowers  
Deep hid by the newly-turned sod.  
Yet the virgin soil stifles her choicest plants,  
But ever the harrowed earth  
Bares her tortured breast to a newer growth  
Of beauty and service and worth.

What though soft skins grow harder 'neath breezes and sun  
And reckless youth steady and old.  
There's a beauty of meaning in silvery locks,  
A daintiness only in gold.  
And those fingers rough twisted by toiling and pain  
Bear true to a dear one's sight  
A message of selflessness often untold  
By fingers soft, dimpled and white.  
For the worker in wax hath a dainty touch,  
Light fingered the moulder of clay,  
But the sculptor in stone drives each sharp blow home  
In a beauty created to stay.

Soon the crocus bud passes, soft child of mist,  
And cloud of spring, purpling blue,  
And the dainty rose lives but in summer time,  
Soft nurtured by sunshine and dew.

But the scarlet hips peep through the frozen snow  
With fortitude wondrous fair,  
Whilst the naked twigs snatch up a jewelled robe  
From the tyrant who stripped them bare.

There are shoulders now bent with the weight of years  
Then raised in young manhood's pride,  
They have reached their own parenthood, brave little babes  
Then toddling by Mothers' side,  
Their children now clamber the sturdy knees  
The prairie grasses kissed,  
There are others who've gone on the last long trail  
Through the vale of the evening mist.

Yet not all have wrenched wealth from the prairie sod  
With harrow and disc and plough,  
And the homesteads now home have been bought full oft  
By the toil of the sweating brow.  
Though a life-time of pluck knows no golden day  
Like the fame of a single deed,  
They'll stick 'till they're done, they'll fight 'till they've won,  
True scions of bull-dog breed.

## TWO FANTASIES

### SPRING

Oh, how I love the Prairie Bluffs in Spring !  
God's Nature Temples on whose slender spires  
And countless pinnacles of budding green  
The gold-eyed blackbird preens his purpling wing,  
And chants his matin-song. Among whose aisles  
The feathered songsters carolling their way,  
Safe tend the choristers of future Springs.  
There the rude wind doth reverent become,  
And speaks in gentle whispers 'mongst the trees,  
And Monarch Sun, no longer holding sway  
Seeks wistfully 'twixt interlacing leaves  
For woodland blossoms hiding in retreat  
Of cloistered loveliness, and finding leaves  
Fresh robe of beauty as in years long past  
That Hebrew Mother clothed her little lad  
For richer service she could never share.  
Thickly the floor is carpeted with leaves,  
Ghosts of a vanished pageantry, who tend  
The future beauty which the present brings.  
Thick verdant mosses intertwined with vines,  
Bright golden fungi, stepping-stones of light,  
Young plants shade softened struggling into life,  
And limbs, soft, broken, falling to decay,  
Yet know no putrefaction in their death,  
But like an aged grand-dame ere she turns  
From life completed to a life begun,  
Exhales their garnered sweetness ere the dawn,  
When life thought ending is but life new-born.



Sweet from the censers of the waving trees  
Faint the young buds their fragrant incense swing  
To the dear Altar of the future hope.  
Present and past both sacrifices bring,  
Here life in miniature around us lies,  
Yet in those fleeting glimpses of the skies  
One sights the marvel of infinity.

## AUTUMN

☛ Nature is holding carnival to-day  
Bright grouped triumphant trees in Autumn dress  
Of prisoned sunshine, glimmering with gold,  
Or slashed with scarlet, others modest stand  
Still decked in summer green, or boldly stretch  
Their naked branches to the cooling blast,  
In lacy duskiness against the sky  
Whose sullen greyness shows their beauty up.  
Then moved to smiling as the sun goes down  
Breaks forth in glory, 'till the sky the trees,  
The very earth below is softly bathed  
In yellow sunlight. Denizens of wood  
Long since have sought the shelter of the South,  
Joyous sounds, hailing Spring's advent, greeting Summer-  
Merge into quietude as coming Fall [time,  
Speaks of completion; Triumph songs methinks  
Are not the fit appurtenance of rest,  
But weary heart when victory is won  
Loves well the golden silences of peace,  
Those mystic spell of melodies untold,  
And pregnant meaningness too often broke  
By sound irrelevant or rasping note,  
Parent of thoughtful watchfulness which finds

Treasures near by which wandering spirits seek,  
In lands far distant, thus perchance the seer,  
Seeing in Fall's perfection subtle glimpse  
Of Heaven's glory, thought not of the glare  
Of gold earth mined, earth treasured and earth sought,  
But that more precious beauty to be found  
In shining sunlight, mellowing of leaf,  
And fruit new ripened, caught one fleeting glance  
Of the Almighty tenderness who leaves  
His golden touch on blossom, heart and sheaves,  
Gleaning the treasure He himself has given  
Ripeness of Earth, to restfulness of Heaven.

EASTERTIDE

Vibrant, exultant, the new-born Spring  
Doth triumph o'er Winter's might,  
And far to the winds his fetters fling,  
And glittering garments bright.  
The streamlets breaking their icy chain  
Rush happily down to greet  
The mirrored sky in the lake near by  
Which gleams at the mountains' feet.  
The leaf-buds gay cast the shields away  
They wore against Winter's storm,  
Sweet blossoms open their petals bright  
And smile in the sunlight warm.  
Gay the song of the bird is ever heard  
And clearly from sky and earth  
Comes the message true which is ever new,  
The glory of Spring's new birth,  
Yet there isn't a tree with a different leaf  
From those which it always bore,  
There isn't a bird with a sweeter note  
Than those we have heard of yore.  
There isn't a plant bearing fairer blooms  
Than those which have always blown,  
There isn't a friend with a truer heart  
Than those we have always known.  
But the leaves on those branches were brown and dry  
And seared by the touch of Fall.  
The song-bird had hushed his song of joy  
Ere heeding the Southern call.  
The rough winds had battered those petals frail  
And scattered in boisterous mirth.

The lips of our dear ones were silent and pale,  
Ere gently we laid them to earth.  
But the heart never tires of the beautiful,  
And ever at parting's pain,  
Comes the knowledge there's never a lovely thing  
We shall not see again.  
Yet as softly that mighty Angel Death  
In silence hovered nigh,  
In wonder at merciless suffering  
Of the Son of the Father most High  
By Him alone was there mercy shown  
To Christ in His bitter grief,  
Grim hate did part from his cruel heart  
As he flew to his Master's relief,  
And God gave to his mission a softer grace  
Long hardened by pitiless strife,  
To guide erring mortals through gateway of tears  
Safe to the portals of Life

## INDIAN SUMMER

Golden light gleaming, o'er the world streaming,  
Nature attired in her loveliest hue,  
Though Summer's leaving, we are not grieving—  
Indian Summer is beautiful, too.

• Steps slower growing, silver hairs showing,  
Deeper lines cut round those bright eyes of blue  
Though Summer's waning, be not complaining,  
Indian Summer is dawning for you.